

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1116

By Massey

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate Mary Costa of Knoxville on the celebration of her ninetieth birthday.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly pay tribute to those citizens who are celebrating special occasions in their estimable lives; and

WHEREAS, Mary Costa will celebrate her ninetieth birthday on April 5, 2020, a milestone that will be commemorated as yet another precious souvenir of life's rich pageant; and

WHEREAS, born in Knoxville, Mary Costa is an internationally acclaimed operatic soprano who, during her legendary career, gave stellar performances with every major opera company in the world, in addition to winning the hearts of generations of fans as the voice of Princess Aurora in the classic Walt Disney film *Sleeping Beauty*; and

WHEREAS, as a teenager, Ms. Costa moved with her family to Los Angeles, California, and upon her graduation from high school, entered the Los Angeles Conservatory of Music to study with famed maestro Gaston Usigli; and

WHEREAS, a gifted young singer, she appeared with Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy on Mr. Bergen's highly popular radio show and sang with Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis in concerts at UCLA, in addition to recording commercials for Lux Radio Theatre; and

WHEREAS, in 1952, the legendary Walt Disney selected Mary Costa to be the speaking voice and singing voice of Princess Aurora in the Disney film *Sleeping Beauty*, which quickly became a beloved classic upon release; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Costa's star continued to rise as, in 1958, she was called upon to substitute for Elisabeth Schwarzkopf at a gala concert at the Hollywood Bowl. Receiving glowing reviews, she was invited to sing the lead in her first staged operatic production, *The*

*Bartered Bride*, produced by renowned German producer Carl Ebert for the Los Angeles Guild Opera; and

WHEREAS, that triumph was followed by a stunning debut at the Glyndebourne Festival and a storied career on the stage that saw her perform in forty-four operatic roles on stages throughout the world, including Jules Massenet's *Manon* at the Metropolitan Opera, Violetta in *La Traviata* at the Royal Opera House in London, and Cunegonde in the London premier of Leonard Bernstein's *Candide*; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Costa's many television appearances included performances with Hollywood legends Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, and Sammy Davis, Jr., and her extensive film credits include parts in *The Big Caper*, *Marry Me Again*, and a starring role in *The Great Waltz*; and

WHEREAS, Mary Costa was personally requested by Jacqueline Kennedy to sing at the memorial service for President John F. Kennedy, and she later performed for the inaugural concert at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in 1971; and

WHEREAS, a member of the Knoxville Opera Hall of Fame, Ms. Costa was one of thirty-eight honorees chosen by the Metropolitan Opera Guild in 2001 for Distinguished Verdi Performances of the Twentieth Century; in 2003, she was appointed by President George W. Bush to the National Council of the Arts; and

WHEREAS, a recipient of the Tennessee Governor's Arts Award, Mary Costa has been awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Humane and Musical Letters from the College of Arts and Sciences of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from Carson-Newman College; and

WHEREAS, we wish to grasp this golden opportunity to specially recognize Mary Costa on this very special occasion; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and congratulate Mary Costa on the celebration of her ninetieth birthday and extend to her our best wishes for much continued success and happiness.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.